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PAUL
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presenting
GOTHAM CITY
SIRENS
in
INTERESTING VARIATION ON THE CLASSIC PRIVATE EYE SCENARIO. I OPEN MY DOOR TO FIND NOT ONE, BUT THREE BEAUTIFUL DAMSELS IN DISTRESS.
EDDIE, WHAT MAKES YOU AUTOMATICALLY ASSUME WE'RE IN TROUBLE?
GUNDOM INN
PIECES OF THE PUZZLE
brought to you by
PAUL DINI writer GUILLEM MARCH artist
TOMEU MOREY colors STEVE WANDS letters
JANELLE SIEGEL assistant editor
MIKE MARTS editor
cover by GUILLEM MARCH

FIRST, YOU'RE HERE. PEOPLE DON'T COME HERE UNLESS THEY'RE IN TROUBLE.
SECOND, YOU'RE ALL IN YOUR WORK CLOTHES, WHICH TELLS ME YOU'RE EITHER CONFRONTING OR FLEEING FROM DANGER, ERGO, THIS IS NOT A SOCIAL CALL.
THIRD...
...YOU TIED MY SECRETARY TO HER DESK. KIND OF OBVIOUS YOU DON'T WANT ANYONE SPREADING THE WORD YOU'RE HERE.
DIDN'T I TELL YA HE'S A GOOD DETECTIVE?
IN FACT, I'D GO SO FAR AS TO ASSUME SOMEONE MUST BE DEAD TO DRAW YOU LADIES OUT IN FULL FORCE.
HE'S TWO FOR TWO!
YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHO YOU KILLED AND WHY?
WE DIDN'T KILL ANYONE.
WELL, NOT YESTERDAY.

SO YOU JUST CAME HOME AND FOUND A DEAD BODY?
WELL, IT WAS MORE LIKE A DROP-OFF.
THAT'S YOUR TAKE. I GOT THERE AFTER SHE WAS DEAD.
AND I SAW THE VICTIM WHILE SHE WAS STILL ALIVE, BRIEFLY.
THIS JUST GETS BETTER AND BETTER. I'LL NEED TO HEAR THIS STORY IN YOUR OWN WORDS, ONE AT A TIME.
WHO'S FIRST?
MEEEE!
OKAY, BUT TRY TO STICK TO THE FACTS, HARLEY.
'KAY.
"I started the day pretty much like I start any other."

"Breakfast...
"...exercise...
"...and personal hygiene."
ONCE DRESSED, I LAUNCHED INTO A THREE-HOUR BATTLE WITH RED MASTER, LADY CATACLYSM AND KILLOBOT 7!
HANG ON, I'VE BEEN OUT OF THE VILLAIN WORLD A WHILE. WHO ARE THOSE HOODS? ARE THEY PART OF A TEAM? WHAT ARE THEIR POWERS?
"Oh, they're just guys I fight with online, usually about movies or TV."
IDIOTS! VAMPIRES ARE WAY BETTER THAN WEREWOLVES!
DOES ANY OF THIS PERTAIN TO THE BODY?
I'M GETTIN' TO THAT.

"It was right after I took the hyenas for a walk.
HYENAS?
"Pups we rescued from some little jerk trylin' to pass himself off as the Joker. Go fig'.
"We keep 'em in the basement or they'll fight with Selina's cats and pee on Ivy's plants."
hyenas
AND THE BODY...?
I WORKED UP A SWEAT WALKIN' THE PUPS, SO I DECIDED TO HIT THE POOL.
CANNONBAAAAL!!

"So I'm all blissed out after a hard day.
"Lyin' there without a care in the world."

"That's when everything went ka-blooey!"

AND YOU HAD JUST ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, IVY?
I WAS COMING HOME FROM A JOB INTERVIEW.
SERIOUSLY?

SERIOUSLY.
I HEARD THE GOTHAM BRANCH OF S.T.A.R. LABS WAS LOOKING FOR A NEW DIRECTOR OF BIOCHEMICAL RESEARCH.
I FIGURED I WAS A SHOO-IN FOR THE POSITION.

* Of course, I had to modify my appearance a bit. But altering the shade of my skin is like reducing the intensity of my poison--easily done with control and practice.
"The alias on my application was Dr. Paula Irving. I brought along a résumé that quite impressed S.T.A.R.'s director, Andrew Raymond. He hired me on the spot."
WAIT, YOU'RE SAYING THE HEAD OF A MAJOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH LAB DIDN'T EVEN RUN A BACKGROUND CHECK ON YOU?
I AMPED UP MY PHEROMONES AND TOLD HIM A SECURITY CHECK WAS UNNECESSARY. NATURALLY, HE AGREED WITH ME.
NATURALLY.
OKAY, HOLD ON.
I HAD A BOMB GO OFF IN MY FACE A COUPLE WEEKS AGO AND I'M STILL NOT TOO SWIFT ON THE UPTAKE HERE.
A BOMB IN YOUR FACE?!
I HATE IT WHEN THAT HAPPENS.

EDDIE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
Yes, Eddie. Riddle me this:
YEAH, FINE. I GOT A LITTLE TOASTED AROUND THE EYES, SO I WENT BACK TO WEARING MY OLD MASK AGAIN. HAPPENS IN MY LINE OF WORK.
Who is "all right"?
I STILL CAN'T QUITE WRAP MY MIND AROUND WHY PAMMIE HERE WOULD WANT A JOB. OBVIOUSLY NONE OF YOU ARE HURTING FOR CASH.
The cleaned-up crook with the swanky office?
The detective darling of Gotham Society?
IT'S NOT ABOUT MONEY, IT'S ABOUT HAVING A PURPOSE IN LIFE. I HAD AN EPIPHANY OF SORTS WHEN I WAS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.
WHILE I MAY CRAVE THE JUNGLE, I ALSO NEED CONNECTIONS TO THE HUMAN WORLD.
The murdering rat living a happy life?
No, Eddie... I don't think you've been "all right" for quite some time.
AFTER ALL, I DO HAVE AN INTELLECT AND ABILITIES THAT SET ME FAR ABOVE ORDINARY PEOPLE.
VERY TRUE.

IT WOULD BE A CRIME TO WASTE MY LIFE OH, SAY, WATCHING CARTOONS AND VEGGING ON THE INTERNET.
RIGHT... HEY!
SO YOU'RE BACK IN THE RAT RACE AND HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT. THAT'LL BLOW UP SOONER OR LATER, BUT GOD LOVE YOU 'TIL IT DOES.
BY THE WAY, AS LONG AS YOU'RE EXPLORING YOUR HUMAN SIDE, YOU WANT TO HAVE MERCY ON MY POOR SECRETARY?
OH, IF YOU LIKE.
WHEW!
INTERESTING TYPE OF LIANA YOU'RE USING. MONKEY LADDER?
ORIGINALLY, I REWORKED IT SOMEWHAT FOR MY OWN NEEDS.
S.T.A.R. WILL GET THEIR MONEY'S WORTH OUT OF YOU. ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL ME?
NO, THE REST OF THE DAY WENT FINE, UNTIL I GOT HOME AND SAW THE BODY FALLING INTO THE POOL.

AND YOU, SELINA, DEAR?
I SPENT MOST OF YESTERDAY TAKING CARE OF MYSELF. AS YOU KNOW, HUSH GUTTED ME LIKE A FISH SOME MONTHS BACK...
"...and even though the Doc says I'm healed, I still make it a point to have check-ups.
"After I got the all-clear from him, I went for some physical therapy."
GYMNASIUM

KRAAGH

SAME TIME NEXT THURSDAY?
I'LL BE HERE.
"So I'm headed home, feeling strong and good about myself.
"And suddenly I get the feeling I'm not alone. There's a rush of air made by something I can't see, and then..."
Doctor...
"And the rest you know."

HMM. *DOCTOR.* WELL, IT CERTAINLY SOUNDS LIKE SHE NEEDED ONE AT THAT POINT. DID SHE SAY ANYTHING ELSE?
NO.
NOT EVEN AN *"OW!"* WHEN SHE HIT.
IS THE BODY STILL IN THE POOL?
WE DRAGGED HER OUT AND TRIED TO REVIVE HER. NOTHING.
WAS SHE ANYONE YOU KNEW? EVEN SLIGHTLY?
A COMPLETE STRANGER.
BUT BRUTALIZED IN WAYS TO LOOK LIKE ANY OR ALL OF YOU COULD HAVE KILLED HER.
A TOTAL *FRAME-UP!*
NATURALLY WE DIDN'T REPORT IT TO THE COPS. WITH OUR REPS THEY'D NEVER BELIEVE WE WERE INNOCENT.
SMART. I'LL CHECK IT OUT. YOU STAY HERE. I'LL CALL IN AS SOON AS I LEARN SOMETHING.

THANKS, EDDIE.
FOR YOU, SELINA? ANYTHING.
That's not quite true, Eddie.
trap, or even a
Whatever the truth, you're The Riddler, and you have to know.

NOT BAD AT ALL, LADIES. APPARENTLY CRIME *DOES* PAY.
HOLD IT TOGETHER, NIGMA. THIS IS BUSINESS.
VICTIM IS FEMALE, CAUCASIAN, NO OLDER THAN TWENTY-SIX. PETITE, ONE-TEN, TOPS.
VICTIM FOUND WEARING WHAT APPEARS TO BE ONE WHITE NURSE'S SHOE.
HOSPITAL WORKER? MIGHT EXPLAIN WHY HER LAST WORD WAS "DOCTOR."
CAUSE OF DEATH, PICK ONE. MULTIPLE LACERATIONS, POSSIBLE ASPHYXIATION...

LOOKS LIKE THE GIRLS' HANDIWORK--FELINE CLAW MARKS, CLOWN MAKE-UP AND A VINE AROUND THE NECK.
EXCEPT THE VINE IS A COMMON ENGLISH IVY VINE, AND NOT ONE OF PAM'S USUAL HYBRIDS.
LIKEWISE, THE MAKE-UP IS SIMPLE DRUGSTORE COSMETICS. THE STUFF HARLEY USES IS THEATRICAL QUALITY.
THE CLAW MARKS ON THE BODY, TOO THICK AND RAGGED TO BE MADE BY SELINA'S DIAMOND-TIPPED GLOVES. MOST LIKELY SHE WAS ATTACKED BY A REAL ANIMAL.
INTERESTING. SEVERAL SETS OF SMALLER CLAW MARKS ON THE VINE, LIKE THOSE MADE BY A LARGE BIRD.
AND IN THE VICTIM'S COLLAR...
OSWALD. HAVE YOU BEEN MAKING MISCHIEF AGAIN?

IF THIS IS PENGUIN'S GAME, HE MUST HAVE SOME GRUDGE WITH ALL THREE GIRLS THAT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT.
THIS LITTLE STUNT WOULD CERTAINLY GET THEM ALL BOOKED ON MURDER CHARGES, UNTIL FORENSICS PROVED OTHERWISE.
OF COURSE, EVEN THEN, FEW COPS IN GOTHAM WOULD GIVE THE GIRLS THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. BIRDS OF A FEATHER AND ALL...
HOLD, IT, HOLD IT... THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THAT OLD SAYING...
QUINN'S HYENAS. SHE SAID THEY WERE LOCKED UP!
AHEEHEH!
HEEEHEE

SORRY, HARLEY, BUT IF IT'S THEM OR ME...
WAIT, THEY'RE NOT ATTACKING. THEY'RE SCARED OF SOMETHING, BUT IT'S NOT ME.
THEN WHAT...?
EEEE

OF COURSE. LIONS, WOLVES, FOXES, ALL THAT'S MISSING IS A *TORTOISE* AND A *HARE.*
MY BRAIN WAS TRYING TO CLUE ME IN WITH "BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER." NOT A RIDDLE, NOT JUST AN OLD SAYING...
BUT THE MORAL TO A *FABLE.*
OBVIOUS, REALLY. IN HER FINAL MOMENT, THE VICTIM WASN'T PLEADING FOR A *DOCTOR,* BUT NAMING HER *KILLER,* SOMEONE GIVEN UP FOR DEAD HIMSELF...

...DOCTOR AESOP!
INDEED, MR. NIGMA. I HAVE OFTEN FELT THERE WAS A KINSHIP, HOWEVER TENUOUS, BETWEEN RIDDLES AND FABLES. IT IS A SHAME WE WON'T HAVE A CHANCE TO DISCUSS IT FURTHER.
SADLY, YOU'VE VIOLATED ONE OF MY CARDINAL MORALS:
"Every man should mind his own business!"
TO be CONTINUED!

BATMAN. DOC SAVAGE. THE SPIRIT. TOGETHER.

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MARCH 2010

POLITICIANS, CELEBRITIES, FOREIGN DIGNITARIES--THEY ALL TURNED OUT TO PAY RESPECTS TO CLARK SAVAGE, SENIOR.

TOO BAD THE PAPERS ONLY TALKED ABOUT THE ONE MAN WHO DIDN'T.
MONK...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, HAM. I UNDERSTAND MONK'S FRUSTRATION.
LOOK, DOC, IT'S JUST, WHEN YOU GO AWAY--

--HE NEEDS SOLITUDE...TO REFLECT...TO CONDUCT HIS EXPERIMENTS.
I GET THAT, RENNY, BUT IF ONE OF US HAD A WAY TO CONTACT--

THEN IT WOULDN'T BE SOLITUDE, WOULD IT?
IF IT'S ANY COMFORT, MONK, THE TIME I SPEND AWAY IS--WAS--BY MY FATHER'S DESIGN.
AND YES, HE'S LOST TO ME NOW, BUT THE IRONY ISN'T.
CLARK SAVAGE

SO, IS IT TRUE HE SUCCUMBED TO AN UNKNOWN ILLNESS?
THAT'S RIGHT. NOTHING THE CORONER OR THE COUNTY MEDICAL STAFF HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE.

HMM.
HAM, WILL YOU FILE THE PROPER PAPERWORK TO HAVE THE BODY EXHUMED?

WHAT? DOC--IT'S BEEN THREE WEEKS...
I'M AWARE OF THAT--AND...

"...THAT TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE."
JESUS.
IS HE?...
WILDWOOD CEMETERY, CENTRAL CITY.

SNOOOOORRRE

NUTTY?

AS A BEDBUG.

HEY! WHAT GIVES, DOLAN?

I NEED A FEW WORDS WITH YOU, DENNY.
WAIT FOR ME IN THE CAR, BOYS.

SO, HOW GOES THE CRIME FIGHTING BUSINESS?
I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME...

'CEPT FOR THE FACT YOU'RE NOT IN IT.
CARETAKER

HMMM... YOU JUDGE ME TOO HARSHLY. I'M A CIVIL SERVANT, SWORN TO UPHOLD THE PEACE...
WHOSE?

OF COURSE I'M INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN MINE.

GREETINGS, DC NATION!

As we round the corner toward the end of BLACKEST NIGHT – and the beginning of BRIGHTEST DAY – it's absolutely impossible not to feel excited. While we unleash all the twists and turns in the story, it's amazing to see ideas **Geoff Johns** & Co. have spent so long planning become a reality on the shelves of your local comics store. BLACKEST NIGHT is truly an epic in every sense of the word, and its legacy will live on in the DCU forever. So get ready to have your minds blown even more (trust me – it is possible) over the next year. In the meantime, you can make sure you're up to date on Blackest Night by heading over to InBlackestNight.com. This official DC site has all kinds of cool information and features. In fact, it covers so much information that I asked our very own Representative of Marketing Publications, **Rickey Purdin**, to make help make sure that I covered everything. Take it away, Rickey:

Hey, everybody – InBlackestNight.com features all of the following awesomeness, so be sure to check it out!

- A cover gallery featuring every single BLACKEST NIGHT tie-in issue with every single variant and every single printing.

- A bio section with detailed info on all the members of all the Corps in the DCU including where you can find first appearances for those members who are still breathing – and where you can witness the deaths of those who are now walking-dead members of the Black Lantern Corps.

- A reader's guide to which collected editions new readers should track down in order to fully appreciate how deeply threaded BLACKEST NIGHT has been and for older readers to keep track of anything they may have missed along the way.

- Checklists for BLACKEST NIGHT tie-ins, avatars for plastering on your instant messages, desktop wallpapers with art by such superstars as **Ivan Reis** and **Ed Benes**, video interviews, BLACKEST NIGHT #0 for free to download, all the prelude "Origins and Omens" tales, a broken-down spread of all the Green Lanterns who have died and in which collected editions you can read those stories, and much, much more!

DC NATION

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GOTHAM CITY SIRENS 9. April, 2010. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to GOTHAM CITY SIRENS, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 308, Congers, NY 10920. Annual subscription rate (12 issues) $24.95. Canadian subscribers must add $12.00 for postage and GST. GST # in R125921072. All foreign countries must add $12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 2010 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. FIRST WAVE #1 Published by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. Copyright © 2010 DC Comics, Advance Magazine Publishers Inc./Condé Nast Publications, and Will Eisner Studios, Inc. All rights reserved. Except as noted, all characters, the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. The Avenger and Justice Inc. are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. d/b/a Condé Nast Publications. Doc Savage is a registered trademark of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. d/b/a Condé Nast Publications. The Spirit, images of Denny Colt, Commissioner Dolan and Ebony are registered trademarks owned by Will Eisner Studios, Inc. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional.. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork. This book is manufactured at a facility holding chain-of-custody certification. This paper is made with sustainably managed North American fiber.
Printed by World Color Press, Inc., Montreal, QC, Canada. 02/17/10.

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